

Majority Leader Tom DeLay
Testimony before Committee on Government
Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
April 3, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. It's an honor to be here with you today to discuss the reauthorization of the President's Executive Reorganization Authority.

There is no greater management challenge to the federal government than its antiquated organizational structure.

In order to meet the needs of the American people, the government must modernize, just as every successful school, business, and non-profit group has in recent years.

The "President's Management Agenda" is designed to establish a government fit to meet the needs of a 21st century nation.

A vital component of this agenda is the restoration of Executive Reorganization Authority to the President, which expired in 1984 and now requires Congressional action.

This authority was held and successfully employed by Presidents from both parties for more than 50 years.

It's ironic the President's authority to reorganize the government expired in 1984, the very year the personal computer revolution launched two decades of efficiencies and reforms in the way people work.

The federal government has lagged behind that revolution, clinging to an organizational model developed between the 1930s and 1970s.

Failing to exploit the benefits of a modernized organization – *a mistake that would bankrupt any business in our competitive economy* – has riddled federal programs with expensive and inefficient bureaucracies.

This model has led to the proliferation of wasteful, overlapping programs across the federal government. One can find such programs in almost any agency and department.

For instance, the Department of Health and Human Services manages 27 individual programs to support teen pregnancy prevention, at an annual cost of some \$200 million.

Each has its own standards and goals. Each is targeted at a different audience.

HHS also manages seven separate *agencies* that fund programs to prevent child abuse. The Department of Justice houses two more.

In the Department of Energy, 45 different offices awarded separate contracts for the same computer database program, and 24 offices awarded separate contracts for the same Internet security program.

I don't mean to single out these particular agencies or programs. They are merely

symptoms of an overall problem in the federal bureaucracy that has ignored modernizing efficiencies embraced by the rest of the world.

And this isn't about reorganizing for its own sake. There is no doubt the federal government expends a tremendous amount of effort and resources – through these agencies – to provide vital services to people who need them.

But duplicative programs and agencies too often only contribute to the very problems they are designed to solve.

These problems are real. They affect real Americans every day. They need to be solved.

We spend a great deal of energy and money to solve them, but the evidence suggests we are not spending that energy and money wisely.

Meanwhile, the problems persist, and, for too many, they get worse.

The staggering array of government programs today is confusing and inefficient, but in a modern and innovative society, they don't have to be.

Successful businesses in the last 20 years have demonstrated agility, responsiveness to shifting demands, and a commitment to customer service.

By contrast, the culture of the federal bureaucracy – laden for decades with layer upon layer of new programs – produces sluggishness, a resistance to change, and confusion among its workers and intended beneficiaries alike.

The American people pay for these programs: they have a right to expect them to work.

To make the necessary reforms, the President needs the freedom to shape and manage a 21st century government that is responsive and accountable to its constituents.

Restoring Executive Reorganization Authority
to the President will help him do just that.